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**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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As I look over the details of the Microsoft Anti-trust case I am amazed at what Microsoft has been able to get away with over the years. I must admit that at first I thought the whole idea of Microsoft having a monopoly was ludicrous but the more I have read and thought about it the clearer it has become that Microsoft does not only have a monopoly but has used that monopoly to further the monopoly. One of the tactics that Microsoft uses (and many companies use) to perpetuate this monopoly is through the use of "secret", "proprietary" or "copyrighted" software, file formats, protocols, and the like. To better understand this think of how the Internet has grown so exponentially over the past few years. A major reason that the Internet was able to grow was because of its openness (in software, file formats, protocols and the like). Standards for communicating between nodes and in published documentation on how to use technologies such as HTML and Email. Email protocol (and all related protocols which allow me to send and receive messages to someone like you) are all open to everyone. By that I mean that anyone who wants to know how something like email works can know how by looking up information on it. They can use that information to develop their own software to send and receive messages so that they are not forced to use the software of any one company. Their program will work with other email programs because they are all using open, accepted, standardized protocols and rules. At an even more basic level the TCP/ IP (Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol ) which is what allows all the millions of computers connected to the internet to locate and send data between each other is an open standard. If any one company had complete control over something like TCP/IP they would control the entire internet as we know it. Not only that but they could then use that control (through things like copyright and patent) to make it so that anyone else trying to implement the same standard or communicate with them would not be able to.

Having open documentation on how things work allows different people or companies to all use those methods equally and does not lock them into any one companies proprietary software or methods of doing things. For example this message is sent to you in plain-text. You can read it using any program that understands the American Standard Code for Information Interchange. Since ASCII is open anyone can exchange information using it and no one can prevent someone else from using it. This is basically what I am meaning by openness in this letter (the ability of anyone to find information on how to use a technology and the inability of anyone else to prevent someone else from using that information however they like). If I were to send you a message in a Microsoft format such as Microsoft Word (.DOC) you would be forced to use a Microsoft product to read that message because it is encoded using a proprietary format. No other company can make a product that can read a DOC file because it is Microsoft's proprietary format and it is protected by Microsoft's copyrights and patents (which is unethical). If

Microsoft were forced to make open things like it's proprietary word DOC format it would allow others to read their documents and thus not force Microsoft's own software on people. Software developers (other than those employed by Microsoft) could write an email client that could read email messages sent in the Microsoft DOC format. This is just one small example of how using "proprietary", "undocumented", "secret" formats and protocols helps to perpetuate a monopoly.

Open source software is a buzz word that has come up recently and is gaining much popularity. Open source developed software has been proven to work just as well if not better than proprietary "secret" software (despite what Microsoft would like us to think). The key to "openness" is preventing any one entity from being able to completely control a resource, technology, or protocol. Microsoft should be forced to take action which will make all their "proprietary", "secret" information open to everyone so that anyone can develop software to effectively work with Microsoft products. Once people are no longer forced to use Microsoft products they can begin to make more free choices as to things like which operating system software they really want to use.

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